

WE CLAIM:

1. A method for specifying a boot order for a plurality of mass storage devices within a computer system, the method comprising:

providing a single user interface menu through which the boot order for the computer system may be specified by arranging in order identifiers corresponding to each of the plurality of mass storage devices; and

attempting to boot the computer system from the plurality of mass storage devices in the specified order.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein each of the plurality of mass storage devices may be one of a plurality of mass storage device types and wherein the mass storage devices may be arranged in any order regardless of device type.

3. The method of Claim 2, wherein the mass storage device types comprise fixed disk mass storage devices, removable media mass storage devices, and optical disk mass storage devices.

4. The method of Claim 3, wherein the identifiers comprise device names obtained from the plurality of mass storage devices.

5. The method of Claim 4, wherein the computer system further comprises a basic input/output system (BIOS), wherein the single user interface menu is provided by the BIOS, and wherein the BIOS is operative to attempt to boot the computer system from the mass storage devices in the specified order.

6. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions stored thereon, said instructions operative to provide the method of Claim 1 when executed by a computer.

7. A computer-controlled apparatus operative to perform the method of Claim 1.

8. A method for specifying a boot order for a plurality of mass storage devices within a computer system, each of the plurality of mass storage devices being a one of one or more mass storage device types, the method comprising:

determining for each of the plurality of mass storage device types whether more than one mass storage device exists of the device type within the computer system;

providing a device type menu for each of the mass storage device types for which more than one mass storage device exists within the computer system, the device type menu including menu items corresponding to each of mass storage devices of the device type, and the menu items of each device type menu being orderable to specify the boot order for devices of the device type;

providing a boot order menu including one or more menu items, the menu items comprising either a menu item corresponding to a mass storage device type wherein more than one device of the device type exists or a menu item corresponding to the mass storage device for each of the mass storage devices types for which only one device of the type exists, and the menu items of the boot order menu being orderable to specify the boot order for the computer system; and

attempting to boot the computer system from the plurality of mass storage devices in the order specified by the boot order menu.

9. The method of Claim 8, wherein the menu items of the boot order menu corresponding to a mass storage device comprise device names obtained from the plurality of mass storage devices.

10. The method of Claim 9, wherein the menu items of the boot order menu corresponding to a mass storage device type comprise a moniker generically describing the mass storage device type.

11. The method of Claim 10, wherein the mass storage device types comprise fixed disk mass storage devices, removable media mass storage devices, and optical disk mass storage devices.

12. The method of Claim 11, wherein the computer system further comprises a basic input/output system (BIOS), wherein the device type menus and the boot order menu are provided by the BIOS, and wherein the BIOS is operative to attempt to boot the computer system from the mass storage devices in the specified order.

13. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions stored thereon, said instructions operative to provide the method of Claim 8 when executed by a computer.

14. A computer-controlled apparatus operative to perform the method of Claim 8.

15. A method for specifying a boot order for a plurality of mass storage devices within a computer system, each of the plurality of mass storage devices being a one of one or more mass storage device types, the method comprising:

- providing a computer BIOS operative to permit the boot order of the mass storage devices to be specified in one of two possible modes of operation, wherein the first mode of operation comprises,

- providing a single user interface menu through which the boot order for the computer system may be specified by arranging in order identifiers corresponding to each of the plurality of mass storage devices,

- and attempting to boot the computer system from the plurality of mass storage devices in the specified order;

- and wherein the second mode of operation comprises,

- determining for each of the plurality of mass storage device types whether more than one mass storage device exists of the device type within the computer system,

providing a device type menu for each of the mass storage device types for which more than one mass storage device exists within the computer system, the device type menu including menu items corresponding to each of mass storage devices of the device type, and the menu items of each device type menu being orderable to specify the boot order for devices of the device type,

providing a boot order menu including one or more menu items, the menu items comprising either a menu item corresponding to a mass storage device type wherein more than one device of the device type exists or a menu item corresponding to the mass storage device for each of the mass storage devices types for which only one device of the type exists, and the menu items of the boot order menu being orderable to specify the boot order for the computer system, and

attempting to boot the computer system from the plurality of mass storage devices in the order specified by the boot order menu.

16. The method of Claim 15, wherein the boot order of the mass storage devices within the computer system may be specified in either the first mode of operation or the second mode of operation depending upon a user made selection.

17. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions stored thereon, said instructions operative to provide the method of Claim 15 when executed by a computer.

18. A computer-controlled apparatus operative to perform the method of Claim 15.